(a) whether some Indian companies have made investments and set up their units in Kenya and Tanzania; and

(b) if so, the details of the areas in which Indian companies have made investment ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government approval has been granted to Indian companies to invest in overseas joint ventures and wholly owned subsidiaries in Kenya and Tanzania for manufacturing of paper, auto parts, cables, chemicals, pharmaceutical formulations, cotton ginning etc. and in the field of trading insurance, promotion of tourism etc.

Performance of Banks in Ladakh

5734. SHRI P. NAMGYAL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of nationalised banks functioning in the Ladakh region in Jammu and Kashmir location-wise;

(b) the total amount stands deposited by local residents in each of the banks separately, as on March 31, 1996;

(c) the total amount advanced to the local residents during the year 1993-94, 1994-95 and 1995-96, Bank-wise;

(d) whether the advances made by the banks commensurate with the standard ratio fixed for making advances; and

(e) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) State Bank of India, lead bank of the District Ladakh have reported that there are 13 branches of commercial banks operating in Leh. State Bank of India has four branches and Jammu and Kashmir Bank Ltd. nine branches.

(b) to (e). Information is being collected and will be laid on the Table of the House.

Demand of Tender Coconut Water in International Market

5735. SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether there is any demand for tender coconut water in the international market; and

(b) if so, the details thereof and the steps taken by the Government in this regard ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) The Tender Coconut Water in small quantity is traded in the International market.

(b) The Coconut Development Board has initiated a project for preservation and packing of tender coconut water through the Defence production Research Laboratory, Mysore and the possibility of exporting it will be explored after perfecting the technology. Some steps taken by Government to enhance the export of tender coconut water include :

(i) Stepped up outlay in the Eighth Plan for both Central Sector and Centrally sponsored project for integrated development of coconut industry;

(ii) Enhancing coconut production and productivity by making available quality planting material, encouraging expansion of cropped area, undertaking rejuvenation, disease management and extension activities.

Occupational Health Assistance

5736. SHRI MEHBOOB ZAHEDI : Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to refer to the reply given to Unstarred Question No. 6121 on May 18, 1995 and to state :

(a) whether the information have since been collected so far;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRIMATI KANTI SINGH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) According to information furnished by Coal India Limited, 94 persons were appointed as Occupational Health Assistants (Trainees) in South Eastern Coalfields Limited and Bharat Coking Coal Limited in 1993-94. No such appointments were made either in the previous year or the subsequent year. These appointments were for meeting an *ad-hoc* need and, as such, no qualifications stood prescribed nor was any formal procedure adopted therefor. As stipendiary trainees, these appointments were not covered by the National Coal Wage Agreement.

(c) Does not arise.

Export of Spices

5737. SHRIMATI VASUNDHARA RAJE : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of different kind of spices exported at present;

(b) the annual export target set for each of the spices for Eighth Plan and actual achievements made thereunder so far; and

(c) the steps taken by the Government to increase the production and export of spices ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) The major items/groups of spices exported include (i) Pepper; (ii) Cardamom (Small); (iii) Cardamom (Large); (iv) Chillies;

(v) Ginger; (vi) Turmeric; (vii) Coriander; (viii) Cumin; (ix) Celery; (x) Fennel; (xi) Fenugreek; (xii) other spices include aniseed, ajwan seed, dillseed etc., (xiii) garlic; (xiv) spices including tamarind, asafoetida, cinnamon, cassia, kokam, saffron etc.; (xv) curry power; (xvi) mint oil; (xvii) spice oils and oldeoresins.

(b) Government has not fixed spiece-wise targets for exports. However, the export projections made by the Planning Commission for the spices as a whole for each year of the 8th Plan period (at 1991-92 prices) and actual exports (at nominal prices) are given below :

(Rs. Crores)

Year	Export Projections (At 1991-92 prices)	Exports (at Nominal prices)
1992-93	384	418.64
1993-94	398	547.25
1994-95	414	607.34
1995-96	431	785.89
1996-97	447	—

(c) Some of the steps taken to enhance production/ productivity and exports of spices include :

(I) Production/Productivity

(i) Supply of planting material of high yielding variety; (ii) establishment of demonstration plots; (iii) adoption of prophylatic plant protection measures against quick wilt; (iv) supply of mini kits; (v) area expansion; (vi) distribution of plant protection equipment; and (vii) soil conservation measures.

(II) Exports

Apart from the general trade policy reforms, the steps taken to enhance export of spices include abolition of cess with effect from 1.8.1996 on export of pepper (except green pepper in brine), saffron, cardamom and spice oils and oleoresins to make them price competitive in international markets brand promotion scheme like "Logo Promotion", grant of "Spice House Certificate", product development to meet international needs and participation in international fairs and arranging buyer-seller meets.

Export of Human Material

5738. SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL : Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether the attention of the Government has been drawn to the news-item captioned "Indian genetic resources sold to US on the sly" appearing in the "Sunday Observer" dated August 11-17, 1996;

(b) whether the Government are aware that United States based Human Genome Deversity Project is procuring human genetic resources from indigenous Indian communities through several hospitals of the country :

(c) if so, the facts thereof and the reaction of the Government thereto; and

(d) the steps taken to stop or regulate the exports of human material and press the US to enter into a specific agreement on the transfer of technology and other economic benefits ?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE (SHRI BOLLA BULLI RAMAIAH) : (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) Government have no knowledge of this. However, there is a Health Ministry Screening Committee on research proposals involving foreign collaboration/assistance which permits the restricted transfer of biological materials abroad under certain circumstances and conditions for purpose of research only.

(c) and (d). Does not arise.

Provident Fund

5739. SHRI PARASRAM BHARDWAJ : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether any suggestion has been made by the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry that Government should and set aside a part of the provident fund for investment in the capital market to induct liquidity into the system;

(b) whether the large amount of funds presently blocked in Government securities are not yielding adequate returns to the provident fund subscribers;

(c) if so, the details regarding the suggestion have been placed before the Government's consideration ; and

(d) the reaction of Government thereon ?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) No suggestion has been received from the Federation of Indian Chambers of Commerce in this regard.

(b) Provident Fund moneys are required to be invested according to an Investment Pattern laid down by Government which is designed to provide risk free, reasonable and tax-free return.

(c) and (d). Does not arise.

Performance of L.I.C.

5740. SHRI JAI PRAKASH AGARWAL : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the details of turnover of Life Insurance Corporation during each of the last three years till date in Delhi;

(b) the investment made in Delhi during the said period in comparison to the above;